

**Amendments to the Abstract:**

Please replace the paragraph on page 110 with the following new paragraph:

Methods for designing an oligonucleotide sequence having a selected duplex stability are provided wherein the oligonucleotide portion comprises at least one modified base selected from universal bases, unsubstituted and 3-substituted pyrazolo[3,4-d]pyrimidines and 5-substituted pyrimidines, and optionally having attached minor groove binders and reporter groups.